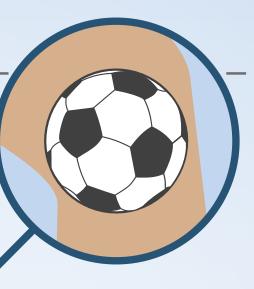
## Discovering

Paleoanthropologist Lee Berger recruited geologist Pedro Boshoff to find fossils in well-explored, South African caves. When recreational cavers Rick Hunter and Steven Tucker joined the team and entered the Rising Star cave system, it sparked a new kind of collaborative scientific exploration.

Hunter and Tucker found a small crevice that led down a narrow 12 meter (39 ft) chute into a cave.

Smaller than a soccer ball at 20 cm (8 in) width

15 m (49 ft)



Caving Master's

Slim

Build

can't fit in those caves; get a team to extract those fossils.

mey will

neëd...

how do them out?

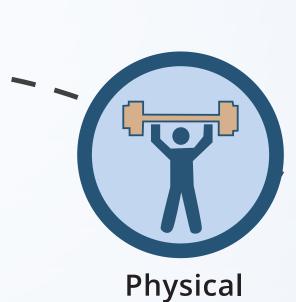
They found many fossils on the cave floor including a human-like jaw.

**Excavation** Experience

Experience

Climbing

Experience



**Fitness** 

or PhD

Photos of the fossils sparked Lee Berger's curiosity and he decided

The 90 m (295 ft) trip below took 30 min each way



what is

this?



No fear of

small spaces

**Above Ground:** 

Scientists watch excavations and study extracted fossils.



...THE most qualified human beings on the planet to do this very dangerous, very remarkable job."

— Prof. Lee Berger

## In the Cave: Shifts in the cave

Scientists 3D scan the fossils and the cave and carefully extract fossils.

Discoveries

What was actually observed

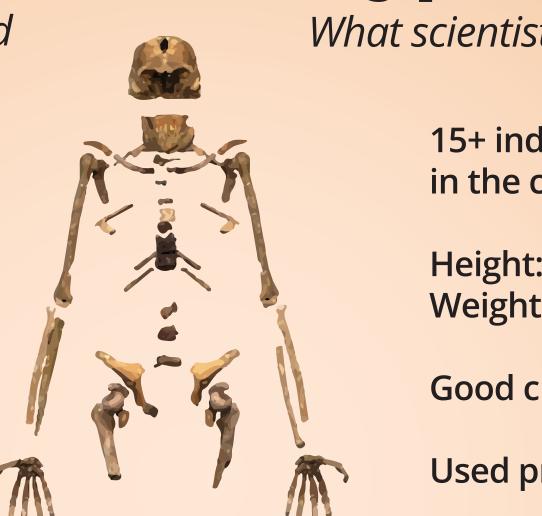
Small skull

**Curved fingers and** long thumbs

Long, muscular legs and human-like feet

No tooth, tool, or burn marks on bones

Bones don't match any described species



## Hypotheses

What scientists think it means

15+ individual bodies in the cave

Height: 145 cm (4.8 ft) Weight: 48 kg (106 lb)

**Good climbers** 

Used primitive tools

Walked up-right

Placed in the cave after death

This is a new species of hominin

weeks in the cave 1550 hominin fossils were recovered

were two to six

hours in length

scientists

involved

years of description

new hominin species

Like all scientific exploration, this discovery leaves us with more questions than answers.

But, unlike all science, this study was made open so anyone, anywhere can read the reports, 3D print the fossils and make their own conclusions. Join the conversation: #homonaledi

